

RDML Buck, RDML Rainey, Commodore Garvin
CAPT Johnston, CAPT Radka, CAPT Phillips
Former VQ/VPU CO's -
CAPT East, CAPT Quigley, CAPT Leeds, CAPT Vinson
CAPT Wenceslao, CAPT Davis, CAPT Hart, CAPT (S) Lee
CDR Pauley, CDR Giannetti, CDR Durkee,

Fellow CO's, XO, Family, Friends, past Shipmates and most notably the Men and Women of Fleet Air Reconnaissance TWO, Good Morning and welcome to the VQ-2 Disestablishment Ceremony.

I would like to start this ceremony off by giving a few particular thanks to some special folks.

To the Northwest Navy Band; thank you for providing us fantastic music for this special event;

To Boats McSwain and the Sideboys, I think we successfully dodged the bullets, they are all standing. Thanks

Our very own VQ-2 Color guard, I could see your Ranger pride in your step as you proudly presented our national ensign.
Thanks to you

Petty Officer Hill from VP-40, for that splendid rendition of our National Anthem.

The Change of Command Coordinators – LCDR Mittag and LCDR Szypula, as well as, the entire Admin department. Bravo

Zulu to each and every one of you for making this week an event not to forget. Everyone that helped make this disestablishment week one not to forget.

I left out one very important CO from my listing on purpose. He was the 5th Ranger CO serving from 1961-1962 and he is turning 91 today. Please help me giving a special Birthday greeting to CDR Art Elder. Happy Birthday Art!

(Applause)

Now back to the task at hand...

The bittersweet day for all current and past Rangers has finally arrived. These Rangers have given some of their best days to ensure that America has been defended from current and past adversaries, but today we have been asked to hang up our gear for the last time and check in our toolboxes.

During WWII and the beginnings of the Cold War in the mid 50's and for the past 57 years, young patriots have been maintaining, supporting, and flying various aircraft engaged in the cat and mouse game of Electronic Countermeasures or better known today as Electronic Support.

We come here today to remember the ultimate sacrifice of over 100 Sailors and the thousand of others who have served within this diverse command over the years. We cannot adequately cover what this command has achieved over the years without going behind closed doors and being sworn to secrecy. Doing our deeds with little fanfare, we have quietly done our tasking, ensuring that if we as a nation ever went to war, our forces

would have the advantage of controlling the electronic spectrum at the time of our choosing.

The Internet may do a much better job of defining what our community can do, but the age-old disclaimer will come into play...I cannot confirm nor deny any capabilities of the aircraft or personnel.

What I can do is to confirm the leadership abilities of my Boss, Commodore Pete Garvin. I have been honored to know the Commodore from my early days at VP-30 when he was a Pre-DH and I a nugget Instructor Under Training back in 1999. His accolades are well documented in the program and I will not embellish them, except to say that the program is definitely understated. He is a master at getting productivity from us while making us happy in doing the deeds. (Some of them dirty) He is a people person that cares about each and every one of the 2000 sailors under his command. THIS IS a sign of a great leader, and the attribute that I admire very much in him. Ladies and Gentlemen, It is now my great pleasure to introduce Commodore Pete Garvin.
(Applause)

Rangers - The day that we have been planning is upon us and moving fast. I am sure that many of the current Rangers in the back of the audience still think that we may get a reprieve, but I can assure you that no option exists to keep the squadron going, other than in our memories.

Oh the memories – Safety has written its last HAZREP, Tactics has written its last TACNOTE, and training has written its last Weekly Training plan – not that anyone ever read those documents, but they do bring back memories.

RDML Buck – Sir, That was just a joke – we do read the HAZREP's.

I need to watch what I say up here...it could be the last time... (Pause)... wait a minute... (Pause)

This last Monday I held our final quarters and I told the squadron that I would give them a little insight into how we got to be in this disestablishment predicament and the opportunities that exist within the Navy.

The Department of defense has a momentous task in front of them to reduce their budget by 40 BILLION dollars a year/for the next 10 years. We are but a small portion of the overall total that needs to get cut, but as always, when it hits you personally, it takes on a new feel.

Not a good feeling. I remember walking out of the CSO's office in Sept 2010, with Skipper Durkee, trying to figure out what in

the hell just happened. We had just talked to the Commodore on the phone and he was saying words such as “options are on the table to close VQ-2” “Cost savings” “Billet redistribution” and all of the other “feel good” catch phrases of the day.

As we went back into our Command suite, and after our initial shock wore off, we started to scheme to try and get the bulls-eye off of our squadrons back.

We heard a big bus backing up...so we came up with the brilliant option of throwing VQ-1 under the bus!

Skipper Rico. I know that you cannot believe this brat burning, beer-swilling, Milwaukee kid would try and throw your Chicago Deep Dish under the bus, but we did!

Obviously all of that posturing, i.e scheming did us no good as we are still sitting on the Dais performing the task at hand – to honor the squadron for its service over the past 57 years and how to do so.

One of the hardest decisions that I had to make over the last few months was who to ask to be the guest speaker for this momentous occasion.

Everyone that I talked to had a favorite. I am sure that a few notable names came up and I am sure that you can guess some of them:

RDML Scorby – A lifelong VQ/VPU leader. He has recently been promoted to the flag ranks, my wife and the rest of the Officer Spouses Group thinks he's better looking than Brad Pitt. Off the list he went...

RDML Buck – Current CPRG, I am sure that he has some experience and great stories in the difficulties of transitioning to a new platform, as well as, insight and lessons learned from the S-3 Community sundown. My wife said he had beautiful blue eyes...Sorry Admiral...off the list you went too.

So I continued my search...and as I looked up and down the list of former CO's, one name always jumped out at me, CAPT Don East.

I have to give you some perspective from where I stand, or better yet, where I used to stand, on how this man affected me throughout my career leading up to this day. Let's go back to 1982, I had just recently enlisted in the Navy and after completing rate training I was one of a few that raised their hand when the rating detailers were looking for Aircrewman.

They offered the South Pacific; I had immediate thoughts of dancing girls and Mai Tai's on sandy beaches.

So after getting to VQ-1 in Guam; which is really in the North Pacific; the beaches aren't so sandy as they were made of coral; and drinking beer because I couldn't afford Mai Tai's; but we did read the Weekly training for our next class of instruction.

I and the rest of the EWOP's were attending a training lesson where we were to watch a filmed lecture on Electronic Warfare. The film started and we had to watch undoubtedly the longest training film ever recorded. I believe we sat there for 2 hours watching this man talk about the intricacies of Electronic Warfare.

At the end of the film he stated that there were a few more items that would be covered in the next few training lectures.

Wait a minute...Did he say the next FEW lectures?! I wasn't sure that there would be a next time...

But at the end, the leading Petty Officer stood up and said that we had just viewed one of the smartest men in the Navy schooled in the art of Electronic warfare. He was a prior Enlisted man that had risen through the ranks and commanded our sister squadron, VQ-2 a few years earlier.

As I grew wiser with age and after I went back to teach new EWOP's at the schoolhouse in Corry Station (a few of you are in the audience) we continued to utilize those training lectures. I continued to learn more and more of the man on the screen and pretty soon those films only lasted 15 minutes as I was amazed by the subject matter.

Right about that time in my life I finally realized that the Navy had programs that would let you attend night school, which could possibly lead to a degree and a Commission.

As I stated earlier, on Monday I talked to the squadron, to the bluejackets especially, on opportunity in the Navy.

I told them that I had seen officers that I had admired leading Sailors which eventually lead to my personal epiphany of “If they can do it, so can I.”

It is not often that after 30 years you can give your heartfelt appreciation to the officer that lit the fire inside of you to be a better person and pursue the dream of being an officer.

CAPT East, the Navy gave me the opportunity, but you were the spark that led me to be on this stage today. Thank you for being the leader that I admired and looked up to so many years ago and thank you for being our guest speaker today.

I can think of no one better to define what I have tried to impart to the squadron this last year, “Rangers lead the Way”, for you were the one that had shown me the way so many years prior.

(Pause)

Commodore, Thank you for the continued sage guidance as we went through the disestablishment process. Your steerage has been spot-on and helped us to navigate these untested waters. I am sure that we would not have been this successful without your leadership. Thank you again.

CSO Radka – Better known to me as “Edward Scissor Hands.” Once he found out that the squadron was going away he

started looking for manning cuts. A little here, a little there...Your leadership was extremely helpful as you had disestablished your own command a few years ago. Thanks for being the sounding board on all of our crazy requests and ideas, and all the while, keeping us on task.

Fellow CO's and XO – I think we had a great time surviving! Thank you for making it fun and lighthearted.

To the Wardroom and Chiefs mess;

Last year I gave you marching orders that the highest priority during the disestablishment was to take care of our Sailors. From the feedback that I received from individual sailors within the command and from others outside of the command, I believe that you succeeded. I remember talking to the Safety Center folks just a month or so ago, and he wanted to verify that we were indeed being told to shut down. He had never seen morale so high! What I took from that comment was that people are happy to come to work. That is about the highest compliment that you could receive as a commanding officer.

To the Goat locker, I could not have been more blessed to have a more outstanding pair of leaders running the Chiefs Mess. Command Master Chief Lemons built and maintained probably the tightest Mess that I have ever witnessed in my 30 years of Naval Service. Thank you for all of the advice and for your insistence on taking more off of my plate! Your friendship will be missed, good luck as you move onto your next assignment in San Diego.

CMC's right hand man, Maintenance Master Chief Brown, has had the Maintenance team running on high warble and making it look easy. Good luck to you as you make VQ-1 the best squadron in the wing.

To the rest of the Chief's Mess - Thank you all for being positive, 365, deck plate leaders while guiding our young Sailors to future success.

To my wife Kathy,
You are the rock that has kept me centered this last year.

Understanding – I think your picture is in the dictionary for that meaning.

Thank you for being the love of my life. I don't say that enough. I love you and thank you for your unending support over my entire career. You made this all possible.

To our children Elizabeth and Sean, I love both very much and am looking forward to the next chapters in your life. Exciting times are in your future and I look forward to sharing them with you.

Pete and Anita, thanks for coming out again to represent the family back in Wisconsin! Remember that you don't wear a hat when walking into the CPO club.

To our friends –

Doug and Kathy - Jack and Colleen - Stacy – Tim and Katie.

Kathy and I both appreciate taking time out of your busy scheduled to celebrate this occasion with us.

Kathleen Brosnan and Stephanie Lemons. Thank you for your understanding as I called in the middle of the night wanting to talk to your husbands. I made both of your husband's work too hard, and made them too late on too many occasions. Thank you.

Angie Sydow our squadron OMBUDSMEN, (Kate Griggs who has already departed), and Jessica Schultz, the Officer Spouses group president. You both played crucial roles keeping our squadron sane. You fielded some of the toughest questions all year long. Inquisitive spouses always wanted answers to problems that they had. Thank you for helping them overcome their difficulties, which helped the XO, CMC, and I to keep the squadron running smoothly.

Finally to the men and Women of VQ-2. You made the improbable happen each and every day.

It is the little things like moving det sites over 7500 miles on a few days notice; while changing engines and props; reconfiguring your target set emphasis within a 24 hour period; ensuring the success of Aviation Maintenance Inspections at home while also supporting a full flight schedule and continuing to train the next set of deployers.

Multitasking is not in your toolbox; it's what your toolbox is made of.

Sailors will give you everything they have; you just need to ask them. I have heard this quote on more than one occasion and it will always be true.

I and all of the previous Commanding Officers have asked you time and time again for "everything you've got" and you have always responded. Thank you from all of us. You are the ones that have made this squadron a success over the past 57 years.

Now I am sure that I left out some others from my list, but I would be up here all day long thanking everybody that made an impact over the last year, but I do have to thank another individual.

At a Change of Command, usually there is a very happy individual and a frowning face on the Dais. Usually the outgoing CO has a glum look and the XO is smiling broadly awaiting his turn in the hopper. Well today it is a bit backwards. I get the happy face as I continue to be the Commanding officer of the UIC for a few extra months, whereas the XO is looking at another year of XO duties and is looking glum.

XO - Remember when I told you that if the FITREPs didn't come in just right we might have you complete a reduex

tour...Well the FITREPs were perfect, but you still need to complete another XO tour!

Tim – Just like I talked to the Bluejackets about opportunity, you also need to look at this as an opportunity. How many times in that past have you said to yourself “If I had to do it all over again I would do that differently?”

Well my friend today is your lucky day!

Tim – You’ll do a fine job in VQ-1. Rico is a lucky to have a confidant that will provide him astute advice. All the while keeping a calm and level headed demeanor.

Thank you for your support, your understanding, but most importantly your friendship.

In a few moments’ memories will be all that we will have of VQ-2. Memories of Port Lyautey, Rota, Athens, Souda, Sigonella, Incirlik, Numerous carriers and the multitudes of other small dets that we have accomplished over the years.

Memories of the Sailors that turned the wrench next to you in the 130 degree heat of Qatar or the freezing weather in Iceland, as well as everywhere in between.

Remember the hours of endless boredom punctuating with 45 seconds of hectic bedlam as a Missile Homer lit off?

Remember the past, but do not live in it.

We all have wonderful memories that will keep the spirit of the Ranger family alive, but I want you to start thinking about the future.

A future where your Ranger spirit will take you to greater success; a future with the Sandeman not on your chest; a future continuing our legacy, that of being the best!

Thank you and may God Bless this great nation!